

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL
PEANUT BUTTER DAY**HON. SAXBY CHAMBLISS**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 14, 2002

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, today is National Peanut Butter Day—a time to celebrate one of America's favorite foods. National Peanut Butter Day is part of the month long celebration of National Peanut Month. It offers a time to recognize the nutritional and economic values of peanuts. The state of Georgia ranks number one in the nation in peanut production growing peanuts in 79 countries and 45 percent of all peanuts grown in the United States. The industry has been a mainstay in south Georgia's economy for over 60 years and continues to benefit our local economy. The eighth congressional district of Georgia is second largest producer of peanuts in the nation.

Not only are peanuts an important part of our economy, but they offer nutritional benefits by providing essential vitamins and minerals. They are an excellent source of the B vitamin folic acid, which can prevent birth defects and lower the risk of heart disease. One serving of peanuts provides protein, vitamin E, niacin, folate, phosphorus, and magnesium, which can help lower blood pressure and decrease the risk of diabetes in women.

National Peanut Month and Peanut Butter Day provides us the opportunity to recognize the benefits of peanuts as well as the hard work of all the people in the peanut industry. Mr. Chairman, I hope you will join me today in recognizing National Peanut Butter Day and National Peanut Month.

A TRIBUTE TO THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY
OF GIRL SCOUTS USA**HON. SAM FARR**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 14, 2002

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 90th anniversary of Girl Scouts USA. For ninety years, Girl Scouts has had a proven track record of empowering girls to become leaders, helping adults be positive role models and mentors for children and helping build solid communities.

When founder Juliette Gordon Low assembled 18 girls ninety years ago she started what would become the largest organization of girls in the world. It was because of her vision, that girls now have access to a forum to develop mentally, spiritually, and physically. Girl Scouts promotes the ideas of fun, friendship and power of girls together. Through experiences such as cultural exchanges, outdoor experiences and community service projects girls learn life skills. They acquire self-confidence and expertise, take on responsibility, are encouraged to think creatively and act with integrity—qualities essential in good citizens and great leaders.

The Girl Scout Mission is “to help all girls grow strong.” I hope we can follow the examples set by the Girl Scouts and remember the great importance of coming together to give back to our communities.

CLEAN DIAMOND TRADE

HON. TONY P. HALL

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 14, 2002

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to update my colleagues on recent progress made in the battle against the scourge of conflict diamonds. The U.S. House of Representatives has been at the forefront of this work, and I am proud of our action on the Clean Diamond Trade Act last year—landmark legislation that would advance this fight. However, this problem requires a broader solution than the United States can implement alone. I am pleased to report that yesterday, the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the Kimberley Process's efforts to craft a system of customs controls capable of ending this blood trade.

International Efforts.—That work is far from complete, and a critical next step will be taken next week as representatives of civil society, the diamond industry, and more than 35 countries gather to finish the job. If they rise to the challenges conflict diamonds pose, we soon will have a mechanism for preventing rough diamonds that fund war from being traded as legitimate gems.

Yesterday, the non-governmental organizations whose exposés of this blood trade instigated this work warned all involved in this work that a flawed agreement may be worse than none at all. More needs to be done on monitoring and enforcing the system, making it transparent through the publication of key statistics on the secretive trade, and on WTO issues will be critical. NGOs argue that neither embattled civilians in Africa, nor terrorist targets in America, nor the countries and companies that depend on the legitimate trade in diamonds can afford half-measures or complacent confidence that the situation magically will resolve itself. They are absolutely right.

There is another grave flaw in this work: it depends upon a definition of conflict diamonds that senselessly excludes those mined in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Under the terms of both the Kimberley Process and the Clean Diamond Trade Act, conflict diamonds are only those embargoed by the United Nations. That means that unless the United Nations imposes sanctions on diamonds originating in a war zone, as it has in the case of the wars in Angola, Sierra Leone and Liberia, trade in the diamonds that fuel conflict there cannot be checked by this new international system.

A War for Plunder.—Diamonds are not the cause of what has come to be known as Africa's First World War, but they play a crucial role in sustaining it and spreading misery elsewhere—perhaps even to the United States, because Al Qaeda, Hezbollah, and other radical organizations reportedly have funded their terrorist activities with Congolese diamonds. There is ample evidence that diamonds and other resources have become the reason for the Congo's war, so ending their illegal trade essential. Some of the most compelling reports of the link between plunder and misery have been made by the United Nations' Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Here are a few excerpts from them:

Parties to the war in the DRC are “motivated by desire to control and profit from the natural resources of the [DRC] and . . . they finance their armies and military operations by exploiting those resources.”—From the report of the Panel of Experts of April 2001.

The conflict in the [DRC], because of its lucrative nature, has created a “win-win” situation for all belligerents. Adversaries and enemies are at times partners in business. . . . Business has superceded security concerns. The only loser in this huge business venture is the Congolese people.

Illegal exploitation of the mineral and forest resources of the [DRC] is taking place at an alarming rate. The conflict in the [DRC] has become mainly about access, control and trade of five key mineral resources . . . Plundering, looting and racketeering and the constitution of criminal cartels are becoming commonplace in occupied territories. These criminal cartels have ramifications and connections worldwide, and they represent the next serious security problem in the region.

The link between the continuation of the conflict and the exploitation of natural resources would have not been possible if some entities, not parties in the conflict, had not played a key role, willingly or not. Bilateral and multilateral donors and certain neighboring and distant countries have passively facilitated the exploitation of the resources of the [DRC] and the continuation of the conflict; the role of private companies and individuals has also been vital.—From the report of the Panel of Experts of April 2001.

The systematic exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth of the [DRC] continues unabated . . . the cease-fire is generally respected on the front line, leaving the exploitation of the resources as the main activity of the foreign troops. There is a clear link between the continuation of the conflict and the exploitation of natural resources. It would not be wrong to say that one drives the other. The military operations and presence in the [DRC] of all sides have been transformed into self-financing activities. . . .

The initial motivation of foreign countries or armies to intervene in the [DRC] was primarily political and security-related in nature; over a period of time, and owing to the evolving nature of the conflict it has become the primary motive of extracting the maximum commercial and material benefits. This holds true for both government allies and rebel supporters.—From the report of the Panel of Experts of November 2001.

United Nations is Dithering.—Despite the eloquent words of the United Nations experts and diplomats, the impassioned calls for action made by virtually everyone who has examined the situation in the DRC, and the full knowledge that each day of delay has serious consequences for innocent Congolese, the United Nations has continued to dither.

Three months ago, the Security Council “strongly condemned the continued plundering of the [DRC's] natural resources . . . which it said was perpetuating the conflict in the country, impeding economic development and exacerbating the suffering of the Congolese people.” But then, instead of acting on the incontrovertible evidence that had been painstakingly gathered, it gave U.N. experts six more months to come up with yet more information and to propose solutions.

Given the complexities of the resource trade, the shifting alliances involved in the war, the thorny issues of sovereignty, and—perhaps determinative—the clear preference of Security Council members to buck tough decisions to a later time, it is not surprising that the Panel concluded in November that:

exploitation of natural resources in the [DRC] cannot be viewed and dealt with in isolation . . . This is one part of the problem which is inextricably linked to other serious issues in the region.

However, in his presentation to the Security Council, the Panel's Chairman, Mahmoud Kaseem, also warned that "failure to follow up on the recommendations would send a message to traffickers and profiteers that they could continue their activities with impunity."

Few could quarrel with what the Panel advocates: "a resolution of the broader conflict in the [DRC] and the region" and a "rebuilding of the State institutions [which] will require a systematic and sustained approach stretching over many years, and with the full assistance and cooperation of the international community." And of course it is good news that yet another round of peace talks is underway today, and better news that, save for low-intensity conflicts, a cease-fire has largely held for nearly a year. But the report's bad news is what's at issue: that, at the present rate, it will take longer to stop the plundering phase of the war than its shooting phase.

Given the richness of the Congo's resources and its horrifying history since the late 1800s, there is little reason to hope the current era of misery will be either short or less deadly than prior ones. Belgium's exploitation of the Congo left 7–10 million dead and a record of viciousness that almost matches that of the drug-addled rebels who've turned Sierra Leone into a nation of amputees and war victims. Then, after the Congo's independence, Mobutu Sese Seko, the strongman who ruled it with full U.S. support for decades, became one of the world's richest men from the trade in resources that are his people's rightful patrimony. Now, in the years since the Congo descended into chaos and war, these same resources again have turned it into a battleground. As respected journalist Richard C. Hottelet put it:

One hundred years ago, novelist Joseph Conrad called what was then King Leopold II's private property the "Heart of Darkness" and its exploitation a horror. This vast land is now called the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and what is happening there eclipses Conrad. . . . The Congo, as big as the United States east of the Mississippi, with 50 million people, has become a carcass being chewed at by its elite and its neighbors. They have looted and sold its natural resources on a scale without precedent. This, with the direct or tacit complicity of pious governments and corporations around the world. . . . For Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, the Congo is too rich a cash cow to abandon. From the *Christian Science Monitor*, May 16, 2001.

Given the Congo's current situation and decades of experience, the question before members of the international community today is straightforward: How long do we intend to wait to act? A small and anemic contingent of UN troops are there now, in a situation that echoes the one in Sierra Leone in the weeks before 500 UN peacekeepers were kidnapped there two years ago. The international community did little until it suffered that humiliation,

then hastened to sanction the diamonds rebels used to fund their brazen attacks. Is yet another crisis what the United Nations is waiting for? Can it instead act on the ample evidence of suffering and plunder before the situation takes another turn for the worse?

I share the fervent hopes of many concerned people at the United Nations and elsewhere that a comprehensive approach to ending the plunder of the Congo and securing a lasting peace will be found. But I strongly disagree with the United Nations' apparent conclusion that—if it can't do everything—it shouldn't do anything. The Congo's people, and others threatened by the problems that fester in its chaos, can't wait for an over-arching system of controls on every valuable resource this rich country produces. They can't afford another six months of expert investigation of problems that obviously exist, and grand solutions that will take even longer to devise than the Kimberley Process has spent on its system of controlling rough diamonds.

In truth, neither can we Americans. A December 2001 account by Washington Post investigative reporter Douglas Farah detailed the way Al Qaeda, Hezbollah and other radical Islamic groups are funding their terrorist attacks by trading conflict diamonds and other Congolese resources. Africans and Americans have learned together in recent months the hard lesson that averting our eyes is not the way to deal with a problem, however intractable.

Congo: The Next Focus.—The United Nations has tied itself in knots trying not to infringe upon any nation's sovereign rights. I understand its dilemma in trying to determine which nations are participating defensively and which are aggressors, but enough is enough, particularly when it comes to diamonds. I suspect what matters most to consumers is that diamonds' image differs from reality. To Americans in particular—who buy half of the world's diamond gems and jewelry, and 10 percent of its rough diamonds—the fact that a diamond might be funding war is what matters. Whose blood stains their token of love, whether it belongs to a Rwandan soldier or a Zimbabwean, probably isn't nearly as important.

When Kimberley Process nations, the diamond industry, and members of civil society complete the first phase of their efforts against conflict diamonds next week, I hope they will turn their energies to the DRC's forgotten war. Finding a way to close the Congo-sized loophole that threatens to undercut their good work on a global system, and that is leaving the Congolese people untouched by an approach that has proven constructive in other countries torn by wars over diamonds, is essential.

Together with other leaders of the work against conflict diamonds in the House of Representatives, I am drafting legislation that aims to support responsible action on this pressing problem. Unfortunately, this is not something the United States can do unilaterally. Nor is it an issue that should continue to be subsumed to the interests of some U.S. allies who are involved in the Congo's war. The precedent we set in the deadliest war of this decade should not merely serve the narrow interests of any one nation; it should support future work to put diamonds beyond the reach of thugs and terrorists.

I look forward to working with Congressional leaders, the Bush administration, the diamond

and jewelry industries, human rights and humanitarian organizations, and others to address this flaw in international efforts to combat conflict diamonds, and to ensure we reach our goal by ending this scourge.

Clean Diamond Trade Act.—In closing, I want to give our colleagues an update on H.R. 2722, the legislation we endorsed 408–6 last November. My hope and that of other sponsors was that the Senate would act quickly on this landmark legislation, both to push other countries to meet their Kimberley Process obligations and to serve as a pilot for this project so any flaws in this approach could be corrected through the legislation the Administration plans to introduce this year.

To my great dismay, that has not happened, and the extraordinary coalition of industry and activists that supported the Clean Diamond Trade Act has collapsed over differences in how Congress should proceed. I remain hopeful that the Senate sponsors of H.R. 2722's companion—which represents a compromise that I brokered between the human rights community and the diamond industry—will find a way through their differences with the Bush Administration and the House so that this bill can be enacted at the earliest opportunity.

I don't quarrel with our Senate partners' preference for stronger legislation; in fact, I share it, and want the record to be clear that their differences are honorable ones grounded in the bill's substance. This is not a partisan issue, as Congressmen WOLF, HOUGHTON and RANGEL and Senators DURBIN, DEWINE, FEINGOLD and GREGG's combined efforts demonstrate.

However, having worked steadily on this issue since I first met the victims of one war over conflict diamonds, and sponsored six different bills aimed at resolving it, I am convinced that there simply is no silver bullet capable of stopping this criminal trade. Giving our Customs agents weapons to battle it, giving activists tools to expose shortcomings in enforcement, finding ways to complement the law through development and diplomacy, and remaining vigilant until this scourge ends are the only real solution.

I hope this work can begin soon, with the United States at the forefront and supported by the international community and this Congress.

CELEBRATING THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY GIRL SCOUTS

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 14, 2002

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer my sincere congratulations to the Suffolk County Girl Scouts in celebration of their 90th Anniversary.

Over 35,000 girls participate in Girl Scouts in Suffolk County and it is the largest Girls Scout Council in New York State. In addition, the Girl Scouts of Suffolk County are the "largest youth serving agency" on Long Island.

The Girl Scouts are dedicated to helping girls reach their fullest potential. And one of the keys they do that is by having girls help other girls. Through peer leadership, mentoring and support, the Girl Scouts help our girls make the transition from child to adult.